



Florida House of Representatives
Eric Eisnaugle
Representative, District 40

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“SUNSHINE FOR LAWYERS” PASSES HOUSE FLOOR VOTE, ON TO SENATE
-Eisnaugle, House say never again to obscene no-bid litigation contracts-

TALLAHASSEE – Legislation ensuring accountability, transparency and good stewardship of taxpayer money when the Attorney General contracts with private attorneys passed a critical House floor vote 71-40 today. The Transparency in Private Attorney Contracting Bill (HB 437), sponsored by Representative Eric Eisnaugle (R-Orlando), maximizes taxpayer dollars by providing a reasonable limit on attorney fees when the Attorney General hires private attorneys on a contingency fee basis.

“The people of Florida deserve to know three basic things about contracts with private lawyers: who is getting the contract, why is the contract required, and how much are they getting paid,” said Eisnaugle. “No attorney representing the people of Florida should ever receive compensation that would make a Wall Street executive blush.”

Florida’s Attorney General has the power to hire private attorneys to sue on behalf of Floridians. These attorneys are compensated based on a contingency fee agreement made between the private attorney and the Department of Legal Affairs. The legislation requires the Attorney General to make a written determination that the contingency fee earned by private attorneys is both cost-effective and in the public interest and requires these services be competitively procured. This legislation also increases transparency in the contracting process by requiring the Attorney General to post contracts, written determinations, and payments online within a specific timeframe.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Attorneys' General in Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina and West Virginia have major litigation mired in conflict because they hired high-dollar campaign contributors to lucrative contingency fee based contracts. Connecticut, Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, Texas and Virginia have already passed sunshine measures that restore public confidence in state legal actions.

“Some ask why we need this legislation now, when there are no pay-to-sue scandals in Florida,” said Eisnaugle referencing a floor question from Representative Fetterman. “Well, you don’t wait for your house to get robbed before you lock your doors; the same principle applies to the state.”

The Senate companion to HB 437 is SB 712, sponsored by Senator John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville). This legislation is a top priority for Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum.

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